



COFFEE COOPERATIVE



FAIR TRADE PRODUCER PROFILE

La Selva, Mexico

"We are convinced that Fair Trade allowed many other groups to find out about our existence as a cooperative. Once others began to find out that La Selva exported coffee we were able to get help with project that weren't just related to coffee production: housing, potable water and road improvements."

—Don Arturo,
La Selva Member

Nestled in the Lacandon jungle of Chiapas, La Union de Sociedades de la Selva (La Selva) formed in 1978 as a result of the Mexican agrarian reform movement and the community's demand for increased health, educational and social services. The cooperative's founding farmers and local priests were largely of the Tojolabal ethnic group and valued the "Theology of the Earth" philosophy. Thus, the major goals of the cooperative were two-fold; to achieve self-sufficiency by cutting out the local middlemen, and to protect the environment for future generations. Today, La Selva's terrace-cultivated coffee fields conserve land and their organic fertilizers ensure sustainable production.

Fair Trade Certified with the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) in 1988, La Selva is committed to improving the livelihoods of its 2039 members and their families, seventy percent of whom are indigenous.

With proceeds from the Fair Trade price, the co-op has been able to

- **Access credit.** La Selva uses the additional income as a means of collateral for securing loans from the local bank during the harvest season. These loans are distributed to their members to prefinance their harvest.
- **Diversify their crops.** Due to increased interaction with other organizations within the Fair Trade system, La Selva has diversified the crops they cultivate, thereby increasing food security for their members.
- **Improve members' standard of living.** Members of the cooperative have traded their straw and grass rooftops for cement-block houses and tin roofs.



ABOUT THE COOP

Date Established: 1978

Number of Members: 2039

Annual Production: 131 Containers

ABOUT THE COFFEE

Varieties: Typica, Arabica, Robusta

Beans: SHB, HB

Elevation: 900 – 1250m

Processing: Wet processing and Sun Drying

Cup Characteristics: Good body and acidity

Harvest Season: Dec-Jan

Export Season: Jan-Apr

Organic Production: 80%

Organic Certification Agency: IMO